

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 XMB-02 TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00

FEA-01 /088 W

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P R 162006Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0175

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 08035

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, SY, XF

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, TO THE RELIEF OF HIS

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GERMAN HOSTS, TURNED OUT TO BE IN SOME RESPECTS MORE

CONCILIATORY THAN THEY HAD EXPECTED. HIS VISIT CONFIRMED THE GERMAN VIEW THAT SYRIA IS MAKING A DETERMINED EFFORT TO EXPAND CONTACTS WITH THE WEST. KHADDAM'S UNYIELDING ATTITUDE ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE PROVOKED A FIRM REJOINDER FROM GENSCHER. THE VISIT PRODUCED FINAL AGREEMENT ON A GERMAN ASSISTANCE PACKAGE OF DM 180 MILLION BUT LEFT IT UNCERTAIN WHETHER SYRIA WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT ON THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF INVESTMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A SHORT BUT ACTIVE VISIT FROM MAY 12-14, SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABDUL HALIM KHADDAM MET WITH PRESIDENT SCHEEL, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, AID MINISTER BAHR, SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT, AND STATE SECRETARY ROHWEDDER OF THE ECONOMICS MINISTRY. ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE REP WHO BRIEFED US, KHADDAM WAS LAVISH IN EXTENDING INVITATIONS TO VISIT SYRIA TO PRACTICALLY EVERY IMPORTANT FIGURE HE MET, FROM THE PRESIDENT DOWN TO ROHWEDDER. GENSCHER HAS ACCEPTED THE INVITATION FOR A VISIT LATER THIS YEAR, DATE TO BE DETERMINED. SCHMIDT ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE, AS DID WILLY BRANDT.

2. OUR FONOFF SOURCE WAS STRUCK BY THE EVIDENT INTEREST OF THE BAATH PARTY IN ESTABLISHING CLOSER TIES WITH THE SPD AND WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE GENERALLY, POSSIBLY ON THE REASONING THAT THEY OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO OFFER THE ISRAELI LABOR PARTY SOME COMPETITION IN THIS AREA. IN ADDITION TO THE PROPOSED VISIT BY BRANDT, THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME CONSIDERATION OF A LARGE SPD DELEGATION'S GOING TO SYRIA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF FORMER AID MINISTER (AND NOW BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SPD CHIEF) EPPLER.

3. KHADDAM WAS CRITICAL OF THE JUST-SIGNED EC-ISRAEL TRADE AGREEMENT, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN CONCLUDED AT A MOST UNPROFITABLE TIME. HE CHARGED THAT IT WOULD GIVE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO ISRAEL TO PERSIST IN A POLICY OF RIGIDITY AND STUBBORNNESS AND THAT IT IN EFFECT MADE A MOCKERY OF THE BALANCE WHICH THE FRG AND

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THE EC CLAIMED EXISTED IN THEIR MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY. IF THE EC WANTED TO RECTIFY OR LIMIT THE DAMAGE THAT HAD BEEN DONE, THEY SHOULD EITHER "SUSPEND" THE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL OR CONCLUDE OFFSETTING AGREEMENTS WITH ARAB COUNTRIES.

4. THE GERMANS WERE OF COURSE NOT SURPRISED BY THIS ATTACK AND WERE IN FACT RELIEVED THAT IT WAS AS LIMITED

IN SCOPE AND INTENT AS IT APPEARED TO BE. THEY NOTED THAT KHADDAM DID NOT, LIKE THE ALGERIANS, ASSERT THAT THE EC AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL WAS JUSTIFICATION FOR KILLING THE NASCENT EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE; ON THE CONTRARY, KHADDAM AGREED WITH GENSCHER THAT THE DIALOGUE SHOULD BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND APPEARED TO SHARE GENSCHER'S VIEW THAT IT WOULD SERVE AS A MODEL FOR A NEW FORM OF MULTI-LATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN REGIONS. MOREOVER, KHADDAM NODDED APPROVINGLY WHEN GENSCHER SAID IT WAS THE EC'S INTENTION TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN, AND LEBANON.

5. KHADDAM STRONGLY ATTACKED EUROPEAN "INACTION" IN MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICAL MATTERS AND URGED THE GERMANS, ALONG WITH THEIR EC PARTNERS, TO DO SOMETHING TO GIVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 08035

REALITY TO THE EC DECLARATION OF NOVEMBER 6, 1973. HIS
LINE OF ARGUMENT, OUR SOURCE SAID, APPEARED TO BE THAT
EUROPE WAS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN THE U.S. TO PUT
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PRESSURE ON ISRAEL, AND THAT WITHIN EUROPE THE FRG WAS
IN THE BEST POSITION TO GALVANIZE THE EC INTO SOME KIND
OF ACTIVITY.

6. GENERALLY, KHADDAM'S STATEMENTS ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI
CONFLICT WERE ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES, ALTHOUGH IN SOME
WAYS LESS THREATENING IN TONE THAN THE GERMANS THOUGHT
THEY WOULD BE. KHADDAM TALKED IN GENERAL TERMS ABOUT THE
RISK OF RENEWED WAR, BUT DID NOT PRESS THE POINT AND MADE
NO MENTION OF THE RENEWAL OF THE UN MANDATE ON THE GOLAN
HEIGHTS IN THIS CONNECTION. OUR SOURCE, WHO HAD ALSO
ACCOMPANIED GENSCHER ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO CAIRO,
COMMENTED THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD BEEN FAR BLUNTER AND
MORE MENACING IN THEIR STATEMENTS ABOUT THE DANGER OF
WAR.

7. KHADDAM IMPLIED THAT SYRIA WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT
THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, BUT ON TERMS WHICH, AS THE
GERMANS SAW IT, NECESSARILY WOULD MEAN THE DESTRUCTION
OF ISRAEL AS IT HAS BEEN KNOWN. APART FROM REFUSING TO
BE PINNED DOWN ON ANY PARTICULAR BORDERS FOR ISRAEL,
KHADDAM INSISTED PARTICULARLY STRONGLY ON UNLIMITED RIGHT
OF RETURN FOR PALESTINIANS. HE WAS COMPLETELY NEGATIVE
ON THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUATION OF THE STEP-BY-STEP
APPROACH TO A MIDDLE EASTERN SETTLEMENT, BUT NEITHER DID
HE SEE MUCH LIKELIHOOD THAT GENEVA WOULD LEAD TO AN
AGREEMENT WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HE TOLD THE
GERMANS QUITE FRANKLY THAT SYRIA REGARDED THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE AS A FORUM FOR MOBILIZING AND APPLYING WORLD-
WIDE PRESSURE AGAINST ISRAEL. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE,
GENSCHER RESPONDED QUITE FORCEFULLY TO THIS PRESENTATION,

SAYING THAT IF THE ARABS EVER EXPECTED A SOLUTION TO BE FOUND ALONG THE LINES OF THE EC DECLARATION OF NOVEMBER 1973 THEY WOULD HAVE TO STOP REGARDING THE SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE AS AN EXERCISE IN ISOLATING AND DESTROYING ISRAEL.

8. ON MAY 13, GENSCHER AND KHADDAM SIGNED AN AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR DM 180 MILLION IN CAPITAL ASSISTANCE DURING THE THREE-YEAR PERIOD 1974-76, DM 20 MILLION OF IT BEING EARMARKED FOR COMMODITY ASSISTANCE AND THE CONFIDENTIAL

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REMAINDER FOR PROJECT AID. THE PROJECTS TO BE FINANCED, ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS WE HAVE SEEN HERE, INCLUDE PETRO-CHEMICAL PLANTS, STORAGE BUILDINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, A MACHINE TOOL FACTORY, A COASTAL FISHERIES PROJECT, AND A COTTON SPINNING PLANT. THE CREDIT IS ON THE MOST FAVORABLE AID TERMS AND WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE KREDITANSTALT FUER WIEDERAUFBAU. ITS IMPLEMENTATION WAS THE SUBJECT OF A MEETING ON MAY 13 BETWEEN KHADDAM AND AID MINISTER BAHR.

9. THE GERMANS, APPARENTLY STIMULATED BY THE IDEA THAT THERE IS LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO BE A SIGNIFICANT FLOW OF ARAB OIL MONEY INTO SYRIA FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTMENTS IN WHICH GERMAN FIRMS MIGHT ALSO TAKE AN INTEREST (PERHAPS ON A BILATERAL OR TRILATERAL PARTNERSHIP BASIS), PROPOSED THE CONCLUSION OF AN INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGREEMENT. THIS INITIALLY MET WITH AN ENTIRELY NEGATIVE RESPONSE BUT BY THE END OF THE VISIT KHADDAM HAD AGREED AT LEAST TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITIES ON HIS RETURN TO DAMASCUS. THE GERMANS FOR THEIR PART SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN A CULTURAL AGREEMENT WHICH WAS PROPOSED BY SYRIA.
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